

Wanna Bet? by heavenlysimbar

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Relationships: Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair, Steve Harrington/Reader, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

In which the step-siblings Max and Billy may have gotten all of the attention, but they were not the only people who enrolled into town on Fall '84.

Or, alternatively, the one where Steve Harrington finds a person who shares the same tendency, certainly not the one to excel at sports, but the one he has to (nearly) fail Chemistry.

1. Like a Virgin

My mind is halfway awake, but I still hope that if I stay asleep a few more minutes, I'll drift back into sleep.

"Rise and shine, (Y/N)! First day of school in 1985!" My mom yells around the house and bangs the door when she walks by my room. I groan.

I was having, I swear, the best dream. You may wonder- why am I so certain? Probably because the main detail I remember from it is that Steve was there.

I hit my face against the pillow. *Stop already. You have to chill about this boy.* I sigh as my disheveled self gets tortuously off the bed.

As the hot water hits my face ten minutes later, I try to clear my mind. *Was there any homework due? What classes do I have today?* I go on, trying to get that stupid boy out of my head. I don't even know why his memory is so prevalent after the winter holidays: it's like this feeling had been in pause until today.

I rush down the stairs to encounter my parents.

"How did you sleep, mi amor?" My dad asks with his mouth full and my mom gives him a severe look to get him to swallow.

"Not enough." I answer as I sit down and proceed to pour a large amount of syrup on my waffles. If anything's gonna get me through this day, is a good breakfast. He does the same a few moments later.

"Why do I have to go on the first day of school, anyway? It's not like I'm gonna miss anything," I complain, as I violently cut my food then take a piece of it into my mouth, angrily chewing it (if that's in any way possible)

"Because one day you're gonna look back to this and say: '*Darn, I wish I had spent my school days to their full extent and not wasted them away staying at home whenever I could.*'" My mom started one of his lifetime-long lectures, but I knew better.

“Oh, I’m *so sure*,” I scoffed and slid off my chair. I didn’t even finish my so-needed breakfast to get away from this bore talk.

I quickly grab my bag and slide it over my shoulder. “Wait! You didn’t finish your breakfast!” My mom attempts to stop me, but school seems better than to stay hearing how I’m ‘spending my life in front of a TV’ or how I ‘should go out more’.

“Gotta seize the day, mom!” I shake my fist in the air for dramatic effect as the words leave my mouth.

The door closes with a bang behind me as I walk without a hurry to hell- I mean, Hawkins High School. I guess it’s probably a nice place for people under the cool radar, but for people like me? It’s a shit-hole of pretentious, trend-following assholes.

There seems to be something in the air this morning, though. The hallways seem quieter and, as I walk by, I realize why with the most bizarre image I think I’ve ever witnessed:

Nancy Wheeler and Jonathan are talking.

They are close to each other, shy even, with the same lovey-dovey eyes they used to share at a distance. We all knew they were going to get together sooner or later, but rather later.

I know Byers for his photographic endeavors- I’m kind of an art fanatic myself, but I’ve never gotten around to show people my work. It’s nothing, really- just a hobby where I pour a whole lot of perfectionism into, I guess.

Shit. I’m staring. I keep walking and hide my face behind a strand of hair.

After witnessing that scene, it seems like the Earth has shifted over the holidays. I expect something new to come, staring around as I open my locker and look for my Chemistry book, but what surprises me next is my best friend.

“Did you wake up on the bitchy side of the bed, (Y/N), or are you gonna greet me?” She scolds me.

I smile. “Good to see you. How were your vacations?”

"Fucking boring, with the tiny upside of getting two huge-ass gifts. *Thank God* for divorce!" She chirped, and I let out a heartfelt laugh—the one I only use around my friends. "What about you?"

"Disgusting. My relatives came to visit the entire time." I recalled. "Socially exhausting, coming from a numerous Latino family." I had gone back to my hometown on Christmas, just to spend our first holiday as Americans as our last holiday with our family. "I'm not even kidding: I found out I have almost thirty uncles total, taking all of my dad's half-brothers in consideration."

She clicked her tongue, then rested on the nearest locker. "...So?"

I frowned. "So?"

"Don't you remember that you have something to do today?"

I held my frown and pursed my lips. "What the hell are you...?" I widened my eyes. "*Shit!*"

"...Yes?"

"Did we have to write a holiday essay for English? God, I'm so *fucked!*"

"Oh my *God*, (Y/N)," my friend stopped me as I was going through my things for a black pen and my notebook, "...remember when we came back from summer vacations last year?"

"...Yeah?"

"Remember we had a deal? A deal that involved you doing *something* as soon as we came back from holidays?"

And then I was frozen still. Now I was fucked.

"You can't be serious!" I groaned.

"I couldn't be more." She severed. "Now, move your ass where Steve is and talk to him or else you're inviting me lunch at the cafeteria."

I checked my bag, praying that there was some leftover lunch money—

but nothing. After I practically ran away from home earlier, I had forgotten to double check my items.

“Can’t you just drop it?”

“(Y/N)- if it wasn’t necessary, I wouldn’t be pushing you to do this.”

I sighed. I had no other option. I would have to approach Steve Harrington, already.

So, there I was: walking fast through the halls when I stumbled on that pretty face. I stopped in my tracks and went through all the possible excuses that would oblige me to not continue with this charade.

*He has a girlfriend. **No, he doesn’t.*** I remember hearing from that Halloween party where he had that nasty breakup with Nancy- hence why she and Jonathan were all over each other when I got here.

*He’s busy. **No, he isn’t.*** He’s there, deep in thought, with no one to talk to.

*He’s an asshole. **Or not. Guess I won’t find out until I approach him, right?*** God, I hate my voice of reason sometimes.

*He’s out of my league. That’s most certain. People like him don’t hang out with the alternative, awkward type. He has shown to like a valley girl with just enough intellect on the side. **Although... one doesn’t go for the same type twice. Isn’t that true?***

I repeat: I hate my voice of reason sometimes.

“Hey.” I greet, trying to sound casual.

He’s a little startled by my presence, but there’s no going back. He is quiet. “Hi...?”

“Uhm, I was wondering... do you have a calculator?” It’s the first thing that pops in my mind, and I feel the need to bang my head against the nearest locker for it.

He has a weirded-out expression. He thinks I’m weird. “Sure. What

happened to yours?”

“It kind of died just now.” Or was it me who died over this guy and his pretty brown eyes? The world may never know.

“Oh, I see.” He opens his locker with a tiny smile, I assume of mockery, and hands it over to me. “I’mma need it later, though. I have Physics third period.”

“Sure. ’s not like I’m gonna steal it or something.”

He raises his brows. “Right.” He probably thinks otherwise now that I have endorsed that possibility.

“Yeah. Well- thanks! See ya!” I hurry through the hall.

“Wait!” I hear behind me but I don’t turn around, and the rest of the sentence mixes out with the voices of the crowd. I stare at the calculator in my hands. *This is fucking ridiculous*, I think while wearing a pathetic grin in my face: *why would I even need a calculator for a test on chemical reactions?*

2. Let's Hear It For The Boy

Summary for the Chapter:

love at first interaction, general awkwardness, the borrowing of a calculator and some crushing!steve goodness narrated by the King himself. you're welcome.

I'm glad I even survived this school break. After all the ordeal with the Demo-dogs, Nancy and even that stupid Snow Ball, I don't think things will ever be the same.

When I get through the door of Hawkins High, I instantly feel like I'm getting looks. Not the positive ones- the ones that would make me feel like King Steve all over again. Just stares. Even I walk past Billy and I don't get a remark or a joke. I frown. *Am I not worthy of notice anymore?*

Then I see the cause of the madness: Nancy and Jonathan. It's still weird on the tongue, but sooner or later I'm gonna get used to it. I look at them and it's not that hard to accept anymore. It is what it is.

Something puts me away from my misery, and it's that laugh. It's like my ears have tuned to the sound of it- like I could find it anywhere.

I follow it to a figure clad in an airy black dress with a white t-shirt underneath and low-cut platform black boots with its back turned to me. I have seen this girl. We always find each other in the crowded halls on Wednesdays, I have noticed. We take the same route but we always part ways: I turn to the Science wing and she takes the Clubs wing. We always brush shoulders or she puts her hand in mine to get through, with a quick '*Excuse me*'. It makes me feel even smaller, though not invisible. She makes me feel like an obstruction. *How come I went from King to Nothing?*

I find myself staring at nothing when I hear an external "*hey*", and I shake myself out of my thoughts and search the source of it.

Speak of the devil. She looks a little worried after greeting me- maybe

because of my absentminded aspect.

“...Hi?” Why is she talking to me?

“Uhm, I was wondering... do you have a calculator?” She is quick to speak. Probably wants to get out of here already. I start detailing her: from hair, to skin, to eyes and nose.

Shit. I'm staring.

Why is she so quiet?

I faintly recall her asking for a calculator. “Sure. What happened to yours?” *Why would she even answer that? I wouldn't answer that. Why do I even need to know what happened to her calculator?*

“It kind of died just now.” She looks a little nervous when she says it, looking at me brightly. God, I could even say in a cute way. She's slightly pursing her lips, which I acknowledge in the moment. *They are making me feel something.*

“Oh, I see.” And mine curve into a smile, so involuntarily I almost don't even notice. I'm almost going to give it to her for the day when I remember- I have class with Mundy today. I smile even wider- that means I'll see her again. “I'mma need it later, though. I have Physics third period.”

“Sure. 's not like I'm gonna steal it or something.”

I resist the urge to laugh and instead I raise my brows and give her a tight-lipped smile. “Right.”

“Yeah. Well- thanks! See ya!” She is leaving earlier than I expected, and quickly marches down the hall gripping her backpack straps.

I scold myself for being awkward, throwing my head back and bumping it against my locker. I remember something as I rub the area.

“Wait!” I yell through the hall. She stops for a second, looks both sides, then keeps walking.

“What’s your name?” I yell again, but this time, she doesn’t even hear me. She only stops when she reaches a raven-haired, short and pale girl, and talks to her about something I can’t quite make out.

I’m invisible.

3. Out of Touch

Summary for the Chapter:

hate at second interaction, math mediocrity and
steve gets his calculator back at lunch! nice

“His *calculator*?” I nodded proudly. “And how many times have you smooched it already pretending it’s him?”

I shoved her playfully. “Shut up. Plus, I have to give it back to him. He has Physics with Mundy after lunch.” The name tastes of poison in my tongue. I’m still mad that asshole didn’t raise my C- to a C on my last test. Fucking Mundy and his tricky questions.

“Did you tell your parents you failed that Physics test with him on November?”

“Yes, and they keep talking about hiring a particular teacher! They should understand me. I had a 3.4 GPA back home, and 3.2 since I got here. I genuinely thought I could get away with the *‘moving has been hard for me’* excuse.”

“Maybe you could try to just tell them you’re less interested in science and more interested on Harrington.” She teased me.

“Shut up already. *God*- sometimes I think *you’re* the one who’s crushing on Steve.”

She ignored me. “You should’ve studied for it instead of vacationing in Washington mid-semester...”

“He can eat my shorts. I pay attention to his class, I do! It’s not my fault that he teaches us what $2 + 2$ is in class then ask us to deduce the mass of the Sun on the test!”

“Whatever. What really awes me is the fact that you got a fucking B on P.E. How do you even do that?!”

“Poor hand-eye coordination is a hereditary bitch on my mom’s side.”

“You have an athletic daddy though,” she pointed out. *Yeah*, my dad was kind of a big thing in basketball back in my home country- he even got around to go to competitions here in the U.S, among other places. I could never join him on his travels since I was too young then.

“Being athletic is not a thing that *runs in your veins*. It’s a choice, and I choose not to be sweaty all the time. So, what? You are a sports freak and I don’t judge you for that.”

“I’m not a sport-! Yeah, you’re right.” And she couldn’t say otherwise. My friend was an athlete big time, in the way that she’d probably beat visitor asshole Billy Hargrove on any sport if she got around to challenge him.

We walked into the cafeteria and picked an empty table. We were past that ‘where do we sit’ phase in Hawkins, as long as there were tables available.

We sat and I started looking inside my backpack for the bag with my lunch, practically getting all of its items on the table. “I still cannot believe you single-handedly got away from inviting me lunch by chatting up Dreamy Harrington-”

“And some people still *cannot believe it’s not butter!*” It sounded funnier in my head, but when I side-eyed my angry friend, my smile faded. I mean, that *was* a stupid joke.

“- Now I got to eat whatever weird, healthy mush my dad sent me today. Gag me.”

“I can pay for your lunch,” a male voice offered behind my back, and I turned.

Holy hell, there he was.

“And I see you have my calculator out and ready for me. That’s very kind of you. Thank you,” he joked, and I checked the bunch of objects on our table to find the calculator sitting on top of them.

“*Darn*, I was just going to skip next period, go home and add it to my collection.” I continued our joke from earlier, returning my items to

my backpack.

He smiled, looking down at me. Mine grew faint, as I was not used to have someone looking at me directly for an amount of time longer than five seconds. It was too intimate for my liking. He mimicked my expression, but I was concentrated on memorizing the details of his face: like that loose strand of hair that fell onto it so perfectly.

"Excuse me, (Y/N), but I think I heard Harrington is inviting me lunch today. Isn't that right, Steve?"

"Course it is. Here," he handed a bunch of bills to my friend without taking his eyes off me, "...help yourself."

We waited until we heard her footsteps walk away to the queue.

"What a gentleman," I pointed out playfully.

"s nothing," he shrugged. "Always trying to help out damsels in distress."

And then my bright expression became defying. "We're certainly *not* damsels in distress."

"You *desperately* needed a calculator earlier this morning. And who lend you his? -"

"I didn't *desperately* need it."

"Oh, I know- you didn't even have Physics this morning!"

"Exactly! So-" Then I remembered: *we're not even on the same grade. How does he know my schedule?* "Wait. How do you know that?"

He seemed to think it through. "I... asked your best friend's brother- I know you had Chemistry this morning, then Biology."

"Angie and I don't have the same schedule, smartass."

Then he opened his mouth, but there was no sound coming out. *Could it be he was invested enough in me to have looked at my schedule? That's ridiculous. We've known each other for less than a day. This*

isn't some movie starring Molly Ringwald or something. Plus- he doesn't even know my name! I have to stop these delusional thoughts.

"You got me. I didn't actually need it," I admitted.

"Then why did you ask for mine?" He asked.

There was no explanation for that that would save me from utter embarrassment, so I bit my lip and looked away hoping that would get me away from answering it.

And, apparently, it worked. "Doesn't matter," I sighed in relief, "...as long as you tell me what your name is."

I frowned. I was about to thoroughly clean my ears to see if I had heard right. "What?"

"What's your name?" He asked, as if it was the most logical question to come after asking a girl why has she been stalking you.

I scrunched my face. "What does that have to do with anything?"

"Are you going to tell me why you needed my calculator, then?" He insisted then, raising his brows.

I sighed. The things I need to do to avoid lifetime-long humiliation... "It's (Y/N)."

"Nice name. I'm-"

"Steve Harrington. I know that."

"How do you-?"

"I'm guessing you remember that when I arrived at the start of the school year, you and Nancy kind of were Hawkins' resident It Couple." He nodded with raised brows and an 'o' shape on his lips, almost as if he really had forgotten. "So, it was kind of in my face: pretty *duh* if you ask me-"

"So, you're new?" If looks could kill, he would already be dead in this

life and the next three. That, if you believe in reincarnation.

“Sorry. *You’re new.*” He turned his dumb question into a dumb affirmation.

“No shit, Sherlock.”

“Fuck you, Watson,” he fought back, and I chuckled.

“...But I am.” I confirmed. “My mom is getting a Master’s Degree in English Education here in Hawkins Uni, so we’ll have to live here for a year or as long as it takes her to finish her dissertation.”

“Where are you from, then?”

“South.” I said as I chewed.

“Really? I can’t quite recognize your accent. Are you from Florida, maybe?”

I swallowed before completing: “South America.”

He seems impressed. “Really?”

“Yeah- why so shocked?”

“That’s pretty far.”

“It is.”

“And your English is pretty good.”

“Thanks.”

“I’m guessing your mom taught you?”

“She’s pretty amazing,”

“She sure sounds like it,”

“...But, she just taught me the grammar. I actually learned English through songs.”

“Songs?”

“Yes. I’m really into music.”

“Oh. Girl stuff.”

I was intrigued by his quick answer. “Define *girl stuff*.”

“Cyndi Lauper, Madonna... -”

“*Hell no!* Sure, they’re catchy but- totally *not* my type.”

“Can it get any worse?”

I shoved him not so playfully: “...But I mean: I dig Queen, Def Leppard- and that one song from Eurythmics gets me going too, so...
_”

“*Oh my god*, what a snob.” I scoffed as he pinched the section above the bridge of his nose and scrunched his eyelids in annoyance.

“‘*Snob*’? You’re a fucking *cliché*! ‘*Cyndi Lauper*’... what makes you think I listen to all that stuff?”

“I don’t know, I just-”

“‘*Assumed*’?” I raised my eyebrows. I straightened my posture to confront him. “What about that ‘*damsels in distress*’ line? Is that what you use to chat up the bubble head valley girls you’re used to? Am I supposed to twirl my hair and giggle for you?”

“No! It’s not- I...”

I got up from the table without further explanation. That just confirmed what I feared from my first verbal exchange with Steve.

He was an asshole.

And I had been stupid enough to give away my name to that asshole.

4. Beat It

Summary for the Chapter:

two high schoolers make amends when a proud father talks about his children. also we learn about positivity (and no, not from he-man. try again)

“Unbelievable.” My friend articulated as she munched on *my* Nerds wild berry and peach combo. “Harrington is a grade A asshole.”

“And you say it just now,” I reproached, then sighed. “Gimme,” I indicated as I extended my hand and I moved it in a ‘come hither’ motion.

“Peach or wild berry?”

I thought it through. “Berry.”

I munch angrily on the small blue rocks as soon as they’re spilled into my hand and I walk down the halls. Definitely not because I just had Literature (I love Teacher Lebateau- that woman is *seriously* righteous) but because of my disagreement with Harrington. God damn, how could I ever have liked that douchebag?

It’s not a hard question: I’m certain I have a thing for careless idiots. I guess that I always think that they could always make an improvement to better themselves and accustom to me. I was so in the wrong- it even *is* a wrong thought itself, I know that... but it always happens. Some guys have tried to hit it off with me, but their awareness just smothers me. What’s my damage, honestly?

“Slow down, (Y/N). You’re intimidating Harrington with your aggressive *chewing*.”

I turned my head. “What the fuck are you talking about now?”

She lolled her head at 2, and I side-eyed the zone. There was Steve, alone again, sitting on the hood of his ridiculous BMW. He was looking at me, not even bothering to be subtle anymore with his open wound. Not that I care- he should stop whining about it, put a band-

aid and move on.

“That preppy poser can fuck himself- I’m motoring. Can your brother drive me home?”

“Sure. I guess it’s whatever-”

“Not a chance.” He opposed as a slightly more tall, brown skinned figure obstructed my peripheral vision.

“Seriously, Michael? Come *on*,” I dragged out the consonant as I yanked his arm.

“No, (Y/N). My dad wants to have dinner with us in some restaurant with his girlfriend.”

“Right! Shit. (Y/N), I’m sorry. He told us to not make any stops. The girl is pretty... *susceptible*.”

“I’m susceptible to be eaten by the wolves if I have to walk home alone!”

“Sorry, (Y/N),” she apologized again handing me my Nerds before they hopped on their Impala.

I held my breath in a gasp as they started the engine. “Fuck- really?!”

And then they were driving away. I waited until they left the parking lot to drop my bag and scream at the top of my lungs. “FUCK!”

I groaned, running my fingers through my hair and grabbing my bag again before stomping along the place, resigned to walking home by now.

“What I hear is a damsel in distress?” A voice teased from behind me, and I rolled my eyes.

I adjusted myself and clicked my tongue before turning to him. “More like ‘*damsel in a stress*’.”

He snickered. “What happened? Your friend ditched you?”

“Her dad is having dinner with them at some restaurant with The Step-girlfriend.”

“Oh, yeah! Michael was telling me all about it. He was so pissed. Apparently, she’s a real pain in the ass.”

Even *he* knew and I *didn’t*? “As much as I’d *love* to stay here talking the night away with you, my parents are waiting for me and I have a long way to walk.”

“Oh, sure. I’ll make sure to not bother you in your... *walk*.”

“Thanks,” I slid my bag’s straps on as I initiated my route, knowing damn well there was no way I was going to survive the walk to Loch Nora. I might just hop into an adventure with a creepy truck-driver who might rape me, all because my best friend ditched me!

I peacefully walked about 20 steps before I heard his 733i’s engine starting up. I expected it to jet past me in signal of victory when it started moving, but I was surprised by the sound of a car horn by my side. I was startled, and I almost tripped at the ungodly noise.

“Do you ever get tired of being annoying?”

He pressed on the car horn as he answered a very pleased “no.” I rolled my eyes.

I kept walking as the vehicle stayed by my side. If I rushed, it sped up. If I walked slowly, it would slow down.

“Oh my God, just - stop!” I yelled out finally, stopping. He pulled on the brakes simultaneously.

“Stop what?”

I walked up to stand right in front of the car as I spoke. “This! If you’re just gonna follow me around, you might as well give me a ride!”

“I’m in no obligation to do so. I’m not the good guy who’s gonna pity you when karma gets back at you!”

“Fuck, Steve!” I was tired and annoyed. I just wanted this to be over with. “Just take me home! *Please?!?*” Angry tears were filling up my eyes, and I stiffened my features as I acknowledged the glimmer that settled on them under the headlights.

He held my gaze with a heavy breath. He turned his head, muttered something I couldn’t make out, then motioned me to get in.

I opened the door and closed it with a bang, and I groggily put on the seatbelt. He stared at me as I did so, making me violently turn my head to him. “If you tell a soul you saw me cry, that’s the end of you. Got it, Preppy?”

“...Sure, yeah.” He nodded furiously.

We both were sitting in silence, but I decided to break the tension and handed my combo box over. “Nerds?”

He looked at it reluctantly, but still grabbed it. “Thanks,” he murmured as he spilled some of the orange rocks on his hand then took them into his mouth.

He started chewing on them before starting the engine again. “This is not a peace offer, alright? It’s just a way to say ‘thank you for not letting me be eaten by the wolves tonight’.

He laughed with an orange tongue. “There are worse things than wolves out there.”

I frowned. “Yeah? Like what?”

He seemed to doubt, as he gulped. “*Uhm* – Billy Hargrove, obviously.”

I smiled. “Yeah. You’re right.”

We were quiet for nearly the rest of the ride.

"This one," I pointed at the two-floor house at the corner. It was a cozy abode, strident even between the fancy houses around.

"Nice crib."

"Yeah. Rooms are upstairs- it's really helpful when my annoying relatives come visit."

He laughed. "Which one is yours?"

"That one with the white curtains. My parents have blinds." I said while pointing at the windows.

"Interesting."

We both laughed softly before our gazes met. Twin brown eyes found their opposite pair as if nothing else existed outside of his (so choice) automobile.

I stopped myself from doing something stupid. "...I gotta go. My mom is probably wishing I wasn't born while my dad is watching the TV, so-"

He raised his eyebrows. "That's seems like a downer's point of view."

"The way's not always up, Harrington..." I reminded him before stepping out of the car, "...but it's always a ride." I finished as I slammed the door.

I think I saw him smirk before he drove off. I victoriously made it through the doorway just before hearing a sentence my ears were almost tuned to already:

"¡(Y/F/N! ¡Ven acá!"

5. Caribbean Queen

Summary for the Chapter:

reader and jonathan are Best Buds, nancy heard something she wasn't meant to hear, angie and steve are sworn enemies, damsel in a stress vs. The Billy Hargrove and steve is worried about reader! neato!

Notes for the Chapter:

sorry for the inactivity! i had lost the laptop i had this saved in but i already did a back-up file. feel free to comment ur opinions (or predictions), i really hope u like it and kudos are always appreciated!

“What’s up, Lover Boy? The girlfriend didn’t attend today to your smooching session?” I messed with Jonathan’s hair as I made my way to a table in the crimson-lit room. It had been over a week since the last time I’d talked to Steve.

“Great to see you, (Y/N).” He dismissed my question as he side-eyed me.

“But, really- what’s up with Nancy? I have seen you around together.”

“We got together over the winter. Very unexpected.”

“Oh, I’m *so sure* ...” I muttered.

“What do you mean?” He frowned with a small smile on his lips.

“Jonathan: I know I’m new here, but it was pretty obvious.”

“What?”

“You guys had... or *have*... some kind of easy chemistry. You two share something. I don’t know if it’s a memory, or an experience...” he fell quiet and looked down with a saddened expression, “...but it made you both into something for each other. And I figured it would

only take time for both of you to acknowledge it.”

He shrugged. “I just- I feel bad for Steve. I think they were still together when it happened.”

“Don’t. I’m sure he’s just fine.”

“How do you know? It’s not like you know him.” I avoided his gaze. “Oh my God: you talked to him!”

I put my hands in view in a defensive way. “Jonathan, it’s-”

“Nancy was right.” He whispered as he looked away with wide eyes.

“Right about what?”

He looked at me in doubt, then proceeded to narrate the scheme. “Nancy overheard your conversation with Angeline the day after Tina’s Halloween party last year. She was on her way to the gym to ask Steve about what happened during her blackout when she heard your friend daring you to ‘talk to Steve when winter break is over or owe her lunch’.”

I facepalmed myself. We did see Nancy walk by, and that’s when I told Angie to shut the fuck up. *Guess the damage had been done already*. “Did she seriously hear that?” He nodded. “*Oh my God: I’m a homewrecker!*”

“I didn’t believe it at first, since all we do here is hate on high school archetypes. But, by the sound of it...”

“Steve’s gonna hate me.” I started pacing around the room, feeling the anxiety creeping up my chest, tightening my lungs and making my stomach flutter. “*He can’t know I was the reason he and Nancy broke up!*”

“Well... you weren’t *the* reason. Worst case scenario, you’re a reason.”

“Jonathan, that’s *not* making me feel better! And it certainly will not make Steve feel better if he finds out.”

“Calm down. Okay? Like you said: *he’s fine* .”

He cupped my face as I inhaled through my nostrils then exhaled through my mouth, trying to relax. “It’s not your fault. It’s *not* your fault...”

I repeated it like a mantra until my breathing went back to normal.

“Good. Now: how did it happen?”

“And all of this ensued after you borrowed his *calculator*?”

Why was this everyone’s reaction?

...I still nodded.

“You got it bad, (Y/N)” He said between chuckles.

“Shut up!” I shoved him. “I still can’t get my mind wrapped around what happened in the parking lot. Why did he burst out like that? Like... did I say something wrong?”

“No. He probably just was still worked up about your misunderstanding, amongst a set of other things.”

“Like what?”

“Well: Billy Hargrove took his well-earned place in the high school elite in the snap of a finger; his girlfriend bashed on their rollercoaster relationship while drunk and broke up with him, then started dating the guy- that’s me- who unknowingly threatened it for months; his dad is a douche...”

“...Fuck.” I muttered. He had it rough.

“Yeah. Also, fighting a Demogorgon *and* the Mind Flayer is no easy thing.” He joked.

I frowned. “What the hell is a-?”

“Nothing. Just- forget about it.”

“But-”

“Let it go, (Y/N). *Really*. It’s stupid.” He dismissed his recent words nervously and left with his freshly-revealed pictures. I snuck a peek, but I didn’t get to see much but a weird, squid-like figure on them.

It was most likely burnt film.

“What mush are we eating today?” I asked Angie as I sat with her in the cafeteria.

“No mush- just carrot sticks.”

“Ugh.”

“We had a fine-ass pizza for dinner at the restaurant the other day though, so...”

I punched her on the arm. “*Ouch!* What was *that* for?”

“You ditched me!”

“Oh, yeah... how did that turn out?”

I gasped as I punched her again. I answered as she cried out: “...well, I managed to stomp for about a block before I got Steve to give me a ride-”

“Steve?!”

“The one and only.”

“See? Nothing happens between you two when I’m around. I’m like your *unlucky charm*.”

“Don’t say that-”

“It’s true!”

I sighed. "...We may have had a *moment*."

"What?! Details, now!"

"Well: we were in front of my house, in his car. We were talking and, all of a sudden, both of us grew... *quiet*. We comfortably stared at each other for about, twenty seconds."

"...and you kissed him."

"There was no kiss."

"Then it was nothing!"

"It was something for me! He's compassionate and funny. I didn't think I could like him even more, but--"

"And why the hell did you not kiss him? That was your cue!"

"There was no *cue* ! We were not on a date, so I wasn't going to kiss him. I have known him for *a day*!"

"Romeo and Juliet didn't waste much time before getting married clandestinely and dying for each other." She nagged as she bit her carrot stick, just an instant before deeply regretting it and spitting inside of a napkin.

"Yeah- but that's different!"

"I know, but..."

"(Y/N), you have to do something about all that's happening to you. You can't wait for Steve to be the one who takes the first step every time. And if you got the wrong idea, then that's it! But I promise you won't regret doing something as much as not doing anything."

"Wow. It's like you want this more than I do."

She laughed, before her eyes caught up into something behind me.
"There he is. Wave at him and invite him to our table."

I turned to watch a clueless Steve step into the cafeteria. I did as I

was told by my friend, but I didn't seem to get his attention. I sighed as I started eating.

Soon, I saw a shadow in the corner of my eye and felt the seat sink to my left.

"Hey, smokeshow."

That wasn't Steve's voice. I looked up to a smirking Hargrove and a clearly disgusted Angie.

"Billy. Hi." I gave him a tight-lipped smile before resuming on my meal.

"Get the fuck out, bogart. You reek of cheap hairspray."

"Nice try at flipping me off, Standall. You wish you were that good on the tracks, too." he teased as she gritted her teeth. There was nothing that annoyed her more than people targeting her athletic abilities.

He talked to me next. "...I saw you talking to Harrington yesterday, and I thought: why is that beauty wasting her time on a beta when she can go out with the alpha?"

I frowned. "Excuse *you*?"

"Friday, then. Do I pick you up at 7?"

I blinked reluctantly as Angie answered for me. "Take a hint, Billy. She's not interested."

He raised his eyebrows, as if it wasn't obvious. "I think she can speak for herself."

I tapped my fingers on the table before speaking. "She's right:" I finally chimed in, "...I'm not interested." I stood up. "And I certainly don't want to hang out with you and the group of friends, sorry-posers and *fanatics* you snatched from Steve's circle. Now, get out of the way. *Jerk*."

And soon I was rushing out of the cafeteria, with people whistling

and screaming behind me. “Feisty, I love it!” I heard him scream out as he slammed his fist on the table. “YOU’RE NOT THAT HOT, ANYWAYS!”

I practically jogged to the library -the only place that was open at that time where I could sort out my thoughts- and I dropped my bookbag as soon as I got to sit on a table. I covered my face, which was still red and hot from the built-up anger, behind my hands.

“Are you okay? What did that scumbag do to you?”

I laughed, as a relief tear fell down my cheek. “Nothing, Steve. He was just being his own self, that's all.”

6. Maneater

Summary for the Chapter:

chapter 5 from stevo's perspective. bonus: steve has a tough decision to make, nancy needs a favor and billy makes a one-sided deal with steve.

“Have you given any thought to my offer, Stephen?”

“Yes, Dad,” I muttered as I moved around the food in my plate.

“...What I’m asking is: are you gonna take the job?”

“I don’t know, Dad!” The fork clashed with the plate. “Okay? I’m still figuring that out.”

“Stephen, I can’t wait forever.” He nagged me as I scoffed. “Just- get around to it.” He abruptly ended our conversation by leaving the dining table.

I ran my hands through my hair then started to ponder on it. There is nothing holding me back in Hawkins anymore, and the whole “applying to Uni” dilemma was sorted out after not sending my admission essay last fall.

The decision had already been made for me. The only choice left in my hands was if I was going to face facts or not.

“Steve,” Nancy tapped on my shoulder to get my attention soon after I got through the door.

“What’s up, Nance? How are you doing?”

“Fine. Listen- *we gotta talk.*”

I winced. “No offense, Nancy, but I gotta get to class.”

“Not like *that!*” she rolled her eyes, “...it’s about the Lab.”

I widened my eyes as she dragged me inside of the music classroom.

She looked out the tiny window in the door before speaking: “Eleven’s sister Kali is recruiting the gifted children from the Lab for vengeance. She saw it in one of her visits.”

I sighed. “Nancy, I don’t wanna take any part on this anymore- “

“Steve, *please* ! You’re too involved!” She pleaded and then muttered as a second thought: “...And the kids need a babysitter while Hopper, Murray, Jonathan and I go on a search party trip to look for them over the coast.”

Is she for real? “Nancy, I’m done with that. Hargrove’s little sister *stole my car* while I was unconscious to go *burn* a demonic creature to *death!* I can’t imagine what else those kids are capable of.”

“Steve...”

“No means no!” I yelled as my final decision, gripping both of her arms. I let them go shortly after, as I relaxed my shoulders and sighed. “I’m *done*.”

I slammed the door behind me.

“Hey, Harrington!”

I had barely survived a week without Billy and his clique of morons, and now they were intercepting me in the halls. Couldn’t they just drop it? I wasn’t even on the radar anymore.

“We’ve seen you around with the new girl- what’s her name?” He proceeded to try and pronounce it, and I rolled my eyes.

“It’s (Y/N), you Neanderthal.”

“...Leave us,” he instructed, and Tommy H. and some other kid quickened their step.

“Not that much of a princess now, eh Harrington? I knew you would take my advice. I always give good advice.” He bragged about the conversation we’d had back on fall in the showers. ‘Plenty of bitches in the sea’, he’d said.

“You know, Billy? I don’t see how that has to do with her.” I said as I threw my books inside my locker. “She’s no bitch.” I clarified.

“You already catchin’ feelings, huh?” He licked his lips wearing that wicked grin of his. “That’s dangerous, Harrington. Soon enough you’ll be back on Break-up-Ville, like you were with Nancy. We certainly don’t want that during the season, do we?” He shoved me and I took my distance.

“So, let me do the team a favor. More so: let me do *you* a favor. A’ight?”

I raised my eyebrows reluctantly. *What in the world could he ever do willingly for my benefit?*

“I’m gonna take that lil’ zeek out. She’ll go ham about me and will no longer be a weight on your shoulders. I’ll get a good fuck for a weekend, and you’ll concentrate on winning for the Tigers. Done deal?”

“Do you ever hear yourself when you speak, Hargrove?”

“I knew you’d agree,” he patted my back before running into the cafeteria.

Fuck, no.

I walked faster and looked around the place for (Y/N). *Where was she?*

It was too late when I found her. She had picked a turtleneck sweater and denim jeans along with her signature low-cut black boots as an attire, and she looked very calm about Billy being on her table- to Angeline’s dismay.

Her voice echoed through the place as everyone fell quiet. "...I certainly don't want to hang out with you and the group of friends, sorry- *posers* and *fanatics* you snatched from Steve's circle. Now, get out of the way. *Jerk.*"

My mouth fell open as people started cheering around her. She walked heatedly through the place, and even brushed my shoulder roughly on the way out. I saw Billy yelling something at her, but I couldn't make out exactly what he said. He shot me a killer look, and that's when I decided to follow her.

Her march led me to the library, where she dropped her bag and covered her face.

I slowly walked towards the table, then quietly sat in front of her.

"Are you okay? What did that scumbag do to you?"

She uncovered her congested face and her eyes stared at me through wet eyelashes. I think my heart stopped when she laughed shortly after, as a tear fell down her face.

She sniffled. "Nothing, Steve. He was just being his own self, that's all."

7. Wango Tango

Summary for the Chapter:

after giving a killer comeback to billy, reader gets a taste of the 15 minutes of fame everyone craves in high school. steve is liking the new-found confidence that implies. nancy, who still needs that favor, gives steve love advice. tommy h. and carol are grade-a snakes, what's new?

"Why is everyone looking at us?" She asked the following week on Wednesday.

Maybe because you look fucking good enough to eat, I thought. How the hell could she look cute and hot at the same damn time? It was ridiculous. I even loved the way that the platforms on her boots would make her my exact height.

"I don't know if you're amnesic, but you kind of told off *The Billy Hargrove* last week in front of the entire school." I reminded her. "In no time, Carol and Tommy H. will be after you. They do *love* a golden star on the rise," I advised.

"It was nothing."

"Then tell them! Which will surely be hard for you- high school fame tends to get addictive."

"But it spoils you rotten," she insisted, opening her locker.

"Fifteen minutes of fame never hurt nobody..." I lured her while swinging my sunglasses between my index and my thumb on her plain view.

She smirked sideways before taking them from me and trying them on. "How do I look?"

I had seen her very well by now, but I allowed myself to drink on her appearance one more time. "Deadly," I choked out.

She smiled brightly this time. "You don't have to tell me. I know."

And that's what made me realize it.

I liked this girl.

Just as I had predicted, they had cornered (Y/N) by third period. She was talking to them with a fake expression of interest with her hands on her pockets. Tommy seemed to try and convince her about something as he tilted his head and got closer to her ear. She looked away from him and our gazes met. I smiled at her with amusement. She grinned fully, and her eyes flickered from Tommy to me and back nervously, as if she didn't know which side to pick.

"Steve." Nancy interrupted our little stare dare as I shook my head.

"Nancy." I answered, then she shot me a severe glare. "Oh- I thought we were stating each other's names."

"I think you know damn well what I'm about to ask you, so..."

"And I think you know damn well what I'm about to answer." I said as my attention averted back to (Y/N).

I saw Nancy mimicking my action on the corner of my eye. "Don't you want Hawkins to be a regular small town again? For it to be a safe place?"

I chuckled as I shook my head, and she sighed before insisting: "... don't you want *her* to be safe?"

That's when my heart dropped.

"You have no idea what you're talking about," I severed.

"I *do* know! And more so, Steve: I *know* she likes you."

"What?"

“She has liked you since fall.”

“What do you mean ‘since fall’?”

She squeezed the bridge of her nose between her nails before further explaining her just-given statement: “...the Friday after Tina’s Halloween party, I heard (Y/N) and a friend daring her to approach you after winter break.”

Something sank inside me. “Not like that!” She put her hands on my shoulders. “Her friend wanted her to do something about her previously-established crush on you. (Y/N) even told her to be quiet when they realized I was listening.”

“Are you sure about all of this?” I asked as I snuck a look at her. She seemed more invested on what Tommy and Carol had to say now.

“Very.”

It took me no time to do the math. “Wait- is that why we broke up?”

“No! Steve!” she sighed, “...we broke up because I wasn’t committed to us anymore. I’m sure (Y/N) didn’t plot against our relationship- even if we hadn’t broken up.”

“To be honest, I don’t know her that much-”

“Steve, *stop* !” She pleaded, widening her baby blue eyes persuasively. “Don’t ruin your idea of her with your doubt. I know I betrayed your trust, and that I don’t deserve your forgiveness- but (Y/N) doesn’t deserve the scrutiny you’re giving her right now! You *have* to learn to allow people into your life again.”

I pursed my lips and looked down. “Yeah.”

She smiled. “Well- gotta go. I have Lit.”

She was rushing down the hall when my conscience got the best of me. “Nancy?”

She turned around dramatically. “Yeah?”

"I'll do it." I gave in. "Take it as a returned favor for letting me know that... you know-"

She laughed. "Cool. *Thank you* , Steve."

I saluted her before she continued her walk, as Jonathan joined her mid-hall.

"...What was *that* about?" (Y/N) asked as she stood beside me.

I turned to her and swung my arm around her shoulders. "Nothing. What class do you have right now?"

She looked at my arm, then at me. "None. The..." She straightened her posture and cleared her throat. "Th' Book Club has a meeting."

I clicked my tongue, as if I was surprised that we didn't see the same classes (though I'd peeked on her schedule). "I have Biology."

"Yeah? What content are you seeing right now?"

We rambled off as we walked through the hall before we diverted. She took the Clubs wing as I took the Science wing, but we were no longer going to pass each other as strangers.

8. Love Is A Battlefield

Summary for the Chapter:

things scalate VEEEEEEERYYYYY quickly. steve gets in two (2) fights with a few hours difference because of a big, little misunderstanding.

“Michael!”

The tan-skinned boy turned his head to give me a tight-lipped smile.

“What’s up, Harrington?”

“I need a favor.”

He clicked his tongue and looked around before intercepting Chris.

“Tell Teacher Lebateau I’m gonna be late for Drama Club.”

I was also in the play, but had a small role as an extra, so the teacher didn’t mind me skipping the rehearsals (as long as I used those hours for basketball practice).

As soon as the guy with the buzzcut had left, he turned to me.

“Whatever, man. Just need ask.”

“I need to get your sister’s friend’s number.”

He frowned. “Dude- I don’t think she’s into you.”

I mimicked his expression. “How would you know that?”

“She always talks to Linn about some guy on the phone: I can tell. I haven’t heard them mention you directly, so my best bet is... it’s not you she’s nuts about. Best friends share everything, you know?”

I pursed my lips as he continued: “The guy *is* from our class, though.”

But I didn’t need to hear anything else. *How could I ever think she was into me?*

I had been avoiding her for a week already when she approached me.

“What’s up, Hambone?”

I was too pissed to even try to laugh at her lousy word play on my last name. “Leave me alone.”

I saw her frown through the corner of my eye. “Someone woke up on the grouchy side of the bed today.”

“Fuck off, (Y/L/N).”

“Right back at you.” She answered, crossing her arms. “Wh’ the hell is up with you, Harrington?”

“Nothing. Let me be.” I slammed the locker as I started walking away.

I managed to walk 6 steps, before an “Uh... I don’t think so,” and a yank on my arm dragged me into the girls’ bathroom.

“What’s your damage, Steve Harrington?” She pronounced my full name as if it was necessary.

“I could ask the same thing.”

“*You couldn’t.*” She opposed. “Why are you being such an asshole?”

“Get a grip, *will ya?*”

Her eyes flickered so frenetically I felt them burn on every single one of my features. “I don’t want to hang out with you anymore.”

Her lower lip quivered, before she straightened her posture and put her arms akimbo. “Why?”

And that’s when I realized. How was I supposed to say “...*because I can’t take that you don’t like me as much as I like you*” without sounding like a brat?

“...I don’t have to explain myself to you.”

And before she could protest in a way that would've unconvinced me from this decision, I stormed out of the bathroom.

"Steve!" She yelled at me, but I kept walking. "You can't do this!"

Even though she was right, I wasn't going to give in. It was hard learning how to trust again, but right then I wasn't even trying.

It took no longer than eight seconds inside the locker room before Billy was muttering to his mates: "Told you. *Break-up-Ville*."

I couldn't believe it. *It had been right in front of me.*

People say that I punched him almost immediately. Over and over until teachers were around me and my teammates were whistling. I wouldn't have known: I wasn't seeing straight. The only remnant of it in my brain is a slow-motion video of my fist connecting to his face and painting it red.

What I do remember very well is entering the Principal's office with a black eye and a cut lip for a lecture and a suspension.

9. Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Summary for the Chapter:

warnings: indiscriminated use of spanish (tried to keep it as neutral as possible- check notes for translation!); another big, little misunderstanding; mention of extremely delicious food; angst, lots of it; and a reveal. wanna guess what?

“He found out, Jonathan.” I said as soon as Jonathan got off my window frame and landed on his feet.

“Found out... what?”

“About the bet with Linn.”

He sighed. “(Y/N)- he didn’t and he won’t.”

“Oh, really? Then I can’t explain myself why we haven’t talked for over a week! I have been a *fucking sight* for *sore eyes* while Steve has been an idiot. I thought what he needed was space so I gave it to him, but Jonathan: I tried to talk to him today and he told me off. He said he didn’t want to hang out with me anymore, and-” I felt my voice breaking as I went on, and he held me in his arms soothingly as I silently cried against his chest.

“I know, (Y/N). I think the entire school heard both of you arguing.”

“This is stupid.” I spoke into his torso and hoped he didn’t notice the tears on his shirt later.

“It is.”

“How did he find out?”

“Well... I do know it wasn’t me.”

I laughed lazily making sure he wasn’t looking at me, and I wiped my tears with the back of my hand.

“Thank you.”

“It’s okay.”

We stayed there, hugging each other before I remembered something. “Now that I think of it, I saw Nancy and Steve chatting the day before we stopped talking.”

Unlike me, he seemed unbothered. “What were they talking about?”

I dissected the memory.

I remembered Tommy and Carol trying to persuade me to host a party so people could get to know me. I was disinclined about it: that meant my mom would enslave me the preceding day to clean around the house just for them to completely trash it after; and moping up vomit if people got smashed. Didn’t seem like a beneficial plan.

That’s when I looked at Steve. I wondered what he would think about it . He smiled at me. Then I remembered what he said: they were using me . **But I wouldn’t let them**, I decided. That’s probably what he thought when he met them , I rationalized. **But you’re not him**, I compared.

All of this was messing with my head, and that’s when I interrupted the couple in front of me: “...I’ll think about it. I promise.”

They got the cue and left muttering to each other about something. I looked away from them to find Steve and Nancy arguing. Or... reconciliating?

“I know I betrayed your trust, and that I don’t deserve your forgiveness...” I think is what I heard from Nancy, as he stared up at him (lovingly?) and maintained a grip onto his shoulders.

Shortly after, he looked down and muttered something with a pout. I couldn’t make out what he said, so I waited until she left to walk up to him. And then he was smiling and hugging me as if nothing had happened.

“...But I don’t know. It seemed like she was apologizing to him about how they ended things.”

He frowned. “You know what? I’m just gonna ask her.”

Before I could even say anything, he was rushing down the stairs to stumble onto my mother.

“Mrs. (Y/L/N)!” He greeted her, nervously.

She widened her eyes in shock. “Hi!” I could tell she was frightened. She didn’t know Jonathan- she’d never even seen him. So, I understood that the very next thing she said was: “ (Y/N), *ven acá.* ”

“ Voy, ” I answered then followed her to the kitchen.

Even though Jonathan did not know the tiniest bit of Spanish, she yanked my arm as we walked far enough from him inside the house for him to not hear us. “ *¿Exactamente quién es este muchacho y cuándo entró a la casa?* ”

“ *Mami, ése es Jonathan Byers. Es parte del club Audiovisual del liceo. Y entró por la ventana porque yo se lo dije.* ”

“ *¿Y por qué le dijiste eso, muchacha loca? ¡Se pudo haber matado subiendo por ese techo!*”

“*Ay mami, ya- déjalo así. Está intacto. No quería que te molestara, y está de paso nada más. Necesita llamar a su novia-*”

“*¿Novia? Y tú invitándolo a la casa...*”

“*¡Mami!*” And I was glad we weren’t talking in English. “*...él no es nada mío sino un amigo. ¿Ok? Necesita usar el teléfono para llamar a su novia Nancy.*”

“*¿Ya tienes amigos?*” I nodded, a little embarrassed. “ *Deberías invitarlos a la casa.*”

“*A lo mejor-*”

“(Y/N)!”

“Coming!”

“ *Dile a Jonathan que si quiere algo de comer. Está un poco flaquito, ¿no?*”

“*No te pases,*” I cautioned my mother before rushing to the living room. “Yes, Jonathan?”

“I have good, bad and terrible news.”

“Spill them. Oh, and my mom asks if you’re hungry. She makes some mean-ass brownies, so consider it.”

“YES, AND THANK YOU MRS. (Y/L/N)!” He screamed. “Well, bad news is that Nancy *did* tell Steve about your bet with Angeline.”

“I knew it!” I yelled out, and I startled him. “Sorry. What are the good news?”

“Good news is that it seems like Steve does like you. He showed himself very caring to Nancy, and all that she was doing was persuading him to give it a shot with you.”

My smile didn’t last much. “Then... what are the terrible news?”

He took a deep breath. “After you guys argued he started a fight with Billy at the boys’ locker room and he ended up on the Principal’s office.”

Suddenly my breath was gone, like a pugilist had just used my lungs as punching bags.

“Do you know his address?” I asked a few moments later, trying to not puke at the flutter on my stomach.

“Yeah- why?”

I grabbed my house keys. “I’m gonna fix this.”

“¿(Y/N)? ¿A dónde crees que vas? Jonathan- have a brownie, please.”

“Thank you, Mrs. (Y/L/N)- but we’re going to visit a mutual friend.”

“Oh- then I’m gonna wrap this up in foil so you can eat it on the way there.”

“C-could you maybe wrap an extra one for our friend?”

“Of course, Jonathan.” My mom smiled as she did so.

“Thank you so much, Mrs. (Y/L/N). It was a pleasure to meet you.”

“Thank *you* , Jonathan, for coming over. I’d love to meet your mother sometime.”

“Sure thing. Thanks again!”

“No problem.”

“¡Chao, mami!”

“Chao, mi *niñita hermosa*. Recuerda llevarte una chaqueta o algo, que hace mucho frío allá afuera.” My mom whispered in my ear as she hugged me tightly and pecked me on the cheek. “¡Cuídense!”

As soon as I closed the door, Jonathan chuckled. “ ‘Mami’ ? Is that like ‘mommy’ or something?”

“Yeah. Why?”

“You call her *mommy* ?”

“Yes. Why? What do you call your mom?”

“ *Mom* .”

I tilted my head and shrugged. “Yeah- sounds legit.”

“This is it.” But I didn’t need to hear it before hurrying to hop off the car.

This house is fucking huge. His parents must be wealthy or something. I caught a glimpse of the backyard: a pool. Fuck, *really*?

“(Y/N)?” Jonathan called me in a shout.

“Yeah, yeah-” I lowered myself and carefully made my way through the snow before peeping through the window.

It wasn’t a particularly happy image. A man towered over his seated figure, yelling at him. A woman, in contrast, was sat there with a stern expression. He turned his face away from the male, and the

sight tore me apart.

His eye was black and both his eyebrow and lip were cut. His right hand had a bandage, but the blood had seeped through it.

Whom I assumed to be his dad stated a finality to which Steve groggily got up to and headed upstairs. I ran to Jonathan's car.

"What now? I can't see him."

"They probably sent him off to his room. You can see his bedroom window from the pool."

"*There's a gate to the pool.*" I pointed out.

"It's always open."

I pursed my lips. "Okay. How am I supposed to get there?"

"There's a back door. Downside is you'll have to walk right behind them to get there." He indicated and opened the car door, "...I'll distract them while you get upstairs."

"Great idea."

I ran as fast as the snow allowed me, before stopping. "Jonathan?"

He was about three steps from the door, with my mom's brownies on his hand. "Yeah?"

"Thank you for doing this."

He smiled. "It's no problem."

I smiled back before quietly opening and closing the gate. I put my ear to the door to hear the doorbell.

"Who (...) it be?" I heard bits of a feminine voice preceding an open door.

"Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Harrington." I heard Jonathan's voice loud and clear. "I'm Steve's classmate, Jonathan Byers."

I slowly opened the door to hear Steve's dad's voice. "He's grounded as of right now, son. Sorry."

"It's *not* ... like that. My mom cooked these brownies for you." He looked at me. "We just moved next door."

"Oh! How embarrassing: we weren't informed there were new neighbors," the couple looked at each other before turning back to Jonathan, "...but, shouldn't we be the ones sending you baked goods and groceries then?" The woman said.

"...Don't worry about that, Mrs. Harrington. My mom bakes all the time. We just wanted to say hi and that we're very grateful that you're our neighbors with these delicious brownies."

Lying came very easy for this fella . I stopped spying on them and hurried upstairs.

When I got there, I turned the knob slowly and checked the room. Luckily, he was there.

"What the fuck, (Y/N)!?"

I shushed him, and surprisingly he obeyed. " *We need to talk* ."

"I *don't* wanna talk!"

"Steve- stop *fucking yelling* . I'm betting your parents will get back at you worse than they're doing right now if they find out you have a girl in your room while you're grounded."

He sighed. "Thank you. Now- I don't know why the *hell* did you beat the shit out of Billy, but you *need to stop* ."

" *When* ...?" He chuckled artificially. "When were you going to tell me that you were dating *Billy* ?"

I scrunched my face in disgust. "WHAT?"

"Don't lie to me, (Y/N)! Michael told me you like a guy from our class. That you're *always* talking to your friend about him on the phone." Did Michael hear my conversations with Linn? *Shit* . "It was

practically on my face, but I didn't wanna believe—

I couldn't help myself but burst out. "Steve, we were talking about *you* the whole time!"

Like that hispanic saying, '*su cara era un poema*'. "What?"

I sighed. "We didn't ever mention your name because *we* feared Michael would tell you about it on the spot." I explained. " *Guess we were right* ."

He gasped. "(Y/N) ... you *like* me?"

" *Yeah!* " I clarified, with heated cheeks. "And now you know."

He was in awe for an instant, then laughed out.

"What's so funny?"

He tried to stop smiling. "Nothing. It's just that... I punched Billy and got suspended because *you like me* ."

"That's not funny."

"It isn't. But... I don't know how to react. We have known each other for... what? Less than a month?"

"Yeah... so?"

"You don't know me that well."

I raised my eyebrows. "Oh, really?"

"Yeah." He reaffirmed getting up from the bed.

"Well, let's test your theory then. I know that you're Steve Harrington, that you're 18 and that you study in Hawkins High. I know that you drive a maroon 733i and that you like peach Nerds over wild berry Nerds."

He frowned. "Yeah, so?"

I breathed deeply before I continued. "I know you fall for people.

Hard. And I know you never really fall completely out of love with them: I see it when you look at Nancy. I know you don't care about being known in high school. I know that your dad is a dick: I see it when your dad talks to you and you look away. I know you wish your mom would just leave him: I know because I've seen them once and she seems like she doesn't deserve that scumbag of a man. I know you like children, because of how you speak of Little Wheeler, Little Byers and their friends."

I was preparing to walk out of the door when he said: "Is that it?"

I turned over. "No."

He looked at me (longingly?) and something in me wanted me to say *'I know that you like me too' ...*

...but I could've been wrong. I wasn't going to risk it, so...

"...I know that *I* like *you* . Because of all the things just listed."

And I left before he could say anything else. Without a goodbye, or a finality, or waiting for an answer. I didn't care about him then: I had put my feelings first. When I crossed the gate on the way back to Jonathan's car, I just hoped that it was a good idea.

Notes for the Chapter:

"Who exactly is that boy and when did he get inside the house?"

"Mom, that's Jonathan Byers. He's part of the AV club from school. And he came in through the window because I told him to."

"Are you insane? Why would you even do that? He could've dropped dead from the tiles!"

"Just let it be, mom. He's unharmed. I didn't want to bother you with a visit and he's not going to be here for long. He needs to call his girlfriend-"

"Girlfriend? On top of it, you dare asking him to come over-"

"Mom!" "...it's not like that. He's just a friend, okay? He needs to use the phone to call his girlfriend

Nancy."

"You are already making friends?" "You should invite them over sometime."

"Maybe I will."

"Ask Jonathan if he wants something to eat. He's a bit skinny, isn't he?"

"Don't say that."

"(Y/N)? Where do you think you're going?"

"Bye, mom!"

"Goodbye, my precious little girl. Don't forget to take a jacket with you or whatever, it's very cold outside."

'Su cara era un poema': hispanic idiom that roughly translates to "[their] expression spoke volumes".

10. I Just Called To Say I Love You

Summary for the Chapter:

short but sweet. steve has something to tell to his parents. #funfact: john travolta is reader's celebrity crush.

check notes for minor-but-needed translation!

I sat down as soon as she closed the door.

Just when I thought I was growing accustomed to a new life, my world had shifted again. I felt my eyes tear up at the realization.

"She really likes *me* ," I affirmed to myself quietly.

Fuck! Why didn't I tell her I like her too? Why was I such a dick?

I crawled in my bed and picked up the phone before dialing the Standalls.

"Hi? This is Steve Harrington. I'd like to talk to Michael."

"This is him speaking."

"You motherfucker! (Y/N) *does* like me !"

"Really? Well- congrats, dude."

"Hell yeah: congrat-fucking-lations for me! You made me punch Billy for nothing!"

"I didn't make you. You decided to punch Billy on your own."

Oh, right. He hadn't. "I don't care about technicalities! So, to redeem yourself for your shitty advice, here's what you're gonna do while I'm gone."

He sighed so deep I could even imagine him squeezing the space between his eyebrows as he did so. *"m listening."*

"You're gonna invite everyone to a party in my house the weekend my suspension is up. And I mean *everyone*."

"Okay...?"

"I'm planning on something huge for (Y/N), but you can't tell anyone about this."

"Good morning, Stephen."

"Morning, sweetie!"

It's not even necessary to point out which one of my parents directed me each one of these two greetings.

"Morning," I mumbled to both of them as I sat and served myself breakfast.

I achieved to quietly finish my plate before my dad interrupted the comfortable silence that had been established. "...So. Listen, Stephen, _"

I stopped chewing. He hadn't used that phony authoritarian tone of his I had heard many times before, so I decided to listen to whatever he had to say: "...I think we all know that Uni isn't an option anymore. I talked to your Principal and he told me that your petty cat-fight with Billy Hargrove is making your permanent record, and that you're suspended from sports for the semester."

Scratch that. It further annoyed me that he pretended to care. "We're gonna have to move to Indianapolis as soon as you graduate."

"What?"

"Stephen- we can't just drive there every day. Why would you want to stay here anyway? You have nothing to do here."

"Dad, I have friends here!"

“Don’t scream at me! I’m not the one at fault of you flunking your future for- what?”

“Don’t go there, Dad.”

“Oh, I’m so gonna go there! It’s just- I don’t understand, Stephen! You always tell us we don’t care enough, and when we try to do better you won’t cooperate!” I rolled my eyes. *That* sounded more like my dad. “I’m gonna ask one more time and, for your own good, I hope that you’ll answer. If not, I swear to God... -”

My mom grabbed my dad and me by the arm. As her grip was strong on my dad, she soothingly traced circles on my skin. “Steve: we’re just concerned about you.”

I sighed. “...I like a girl. Her name is (Y/N).”

My mom frowned. “Wait. Weren’t you dating Nancy?”

“No. I mean- yeah. We broke up on December. She’s dating a guy called Jonathan now. You don’t know him.”

“Actually, we do. He dropped by yesterday with some brownies. What a nice boy.” I frowned, but still smiled. *At least they were trying.*

“ *Seems queer to me,* ” my dad mumbled with a full mouth.

My mom nudged him. “Tell me more about this girl...” she tried to pronounce her name. Why was it so hard for other people?

“(Y/N). Yeah- I think she’s seventeen. She’s really funny. She’s from South America.”

“ *Wow* . So... you know her because you are part of a Welcome Committee or something?”

“No! Not at all. She just borrowed my calculator once. Her English is pretty good.”

“We’d love to meet her sometime.”

“No! It’s not... like *that* . I mean, she likes me and I like her, but-”

“What, *Stephanie* ?” His way of saying ‘*don’t be such a girl*’ .

I glared at him. “I haven’t had the chance to tell her.”

And there came the fatherliest advice I think my dad ever gave me: “Stephen: destiny is not gonna come and knock at your door. You have to make it.”

Now I was smiling. “Yeah. Yeah! That’s what I’m gonna do. Thanks, Dad. Thanks, Mom. I’mma go and wash the dishes, okay?”

“Thank you, honey.” My mom said as she kissed my forehead.

“ ¿*Aló?* ”

“Hi, this is Steve Harrington. Is this the (Y/L/N) household?”

The man answered with a really strong accent. “*Yes, yes. This is (Y/D/N) (Y/L/N) speaking.*”

“I was wondering if I could talk to (Y/N).”

What I heard next was a muffled call of her name, previous to a “ *Te llaman.* ”

“Huh?”

“*Nothing, that’s my dad. Who is this?*”

“The man of your dreams.”

“*You mean John Travolta?*”

“What? *No!* ” She laughed at the other end of the line. “This is Steve.”

“*Oh! Steve. Hi there.*”

“Hi. That was your dad right there? His voice is fearsome.”

"He's a sweetie, I promise."

"Okay, then. He doesn't know English, right?"

"Just a few words. We've tried to teach him but that damn accent of his can't just get off his tongue."

I laughed. "Yikes. "

"Don't mock him! You don't know the tiniest bit of Spanish yourself."

"So, what? This is America. We speak English here."

"Whatever..." I could imagine her rolling her eyes. *"To what do I owe the pleasure of talking to you, Steve?"*

"Just wanted to hear your voice. What did you do at school today?"

"Not much. I had Physics, then P.E. So glad you weren't there."

"Yeah? Why is that?" I threw myself on the bed, rolling the phone wire on my index.

"Your class saw me sweat like a pig while we were running. Shocker: I have no physical endurance whatsoever."

I chuckled. "Maybe we could do exercise together sometime."

"I'd rather not. I could never get rid of these cheeks anyway."

"You're right. I would miss them."

"Why?"

"They make you look cute."

"...Yeah, right."

"They do! And even cuter when they get red because of me."

She fell quiet for a moment before I heard the slam of a door.

"...You know you're not helping the 'I like you' situation, right?"

“Maybe I don’t want to.”

“Why wouldn’t you?”

“It’s beneficial for me.”

“How is it beneficial?”

“When a girl likes a boy, other girls start noticing that boy. It’s science.”

“That’s not science.”

“Maybe not, but you’ve seen it happen. Haven’t you?”

She huffed. *“...you’re using me to get other girls’ attention?”*

“No, but I wouldn’t mind it.”

“I like you less now.”

“See? I *am* helping!”

“Huh. I guess you are.”

“Am I not the best?”

“The fact that you’re actually cooperating with me getting rid of my crush on you isn’t a good thing - plus, soon enough you’re probably going to do the stupidest, tiniest thing for me that will get me back.”

“Will I?”

I heard what seemed like a bed creaking. *“Yeah you will, and it will be worse.”*

I laughed. *“Alright . I promise to treat you like shit so you can get over me.”*

“Great. Thank you .”

“No problem, gorgeous.” Well – that slipped.

“Steve!”

“Alright! *Alright* . Starting now.”

Notes for the Chapter:

"¿Aló?", alternatively "¿Diga?": Ways to answer the phone.

"Te llaman": "Someone on the phone wants to talk to you."

11. Money for Nothing

Summary for the Chapter:

reader FINALLY tells her friends what went down at the harrington household. a mini-fight, food mention, and steve gets a job... but you've been known, right?

The next day we were talking about what had happened at Harrington's.

"I'm a little pissed you got to meet Steve's parents sooner than me."

Jonathan shrugged sassily. "I mean, you could've taken your time. I was comfortably chatting Mama and Papa Harrington while snacking on your mother's brownies. Pretty sure they loved me."

Angie raised her brows reluctantly. "Were you really?"

"Of course not!" Jonathan replied to her as he turned to shove me. "Are you serious?! What took you so long?"

"Hey! - We just... cleared things up. Everything is fine now."

I calmly moved the food around my plate, hoping they would carry on with the conversation.

But I still felt their eyes on me. They wanted to know.

"Well - tell us!"

"I-" "Tell us what?"

Nancy sat down with us next to Jonathan, whispering a "Hey, baby" and planting a kiss on his cheek before leaning towards the center of the table.

I glared at her and she dropped her palms on the cold surface. "Come on, (Y/N)! Are you seriously mad at me?"

I had another bite of my lunch. *Keep it cool*, I told myself, *keep it cool until she leaves. You're not that desperate for an apology.*

"Oh, you're just gonna ignore me. *Very mature .*"

I continued munching, louder and faster this time, before she stood up from the table and took my food away from me. I closed and opened my hands, hissing out of frustration and doing my best efforts to not punch her then and there. *Nobody fucked with my food. Specially when I was in a bad mood.*

"Why are you mad at me?!"

Jonathan grabbed her wrist to hold her back. "Nancy -- leave her alone, will you?"

"Don't, Jonathan." I took a deep breath before answering very calmly. "Telling Steve that I like him was supposed to be *my* thing, Nancy."

"Well... if I hadn't done it, you probably wouldn't have mustered up the courage to do so by yourself any time soon!"

My mouth fell agape, my nostrils flaring and my cheeks burning up in humiliation. "If you hadn't done it, we wouldn't be having this discussion!"

"Alright, I get it. I'm... sorry." She quietly sat down and gave me my tray back.

I looked down at it before muttering: "Thank you."

I took an angry bite of my burger before staring back at the trio, which was still expectant.

"Fine! Oh my *god* , you guys are such *gossips* !"

I chewed rapidly and swallowed. "I spoke to Steve. I snuck into his room and we talked."

Jonathan rolled her eyes. "And...?"

I took a long sip of my drink. "He punched Billy... because he believed I was *dating* him."

Angie snorted loudly. "Wait -- what now?"

"- I don't really *know* what went through his head that made him do that. But that's all I could get out from him."

"He likes you." Nancy concluded, and the rest of us showed ourselves curious for her justification. "Only love makes you that crazy. And that damn stupid."

Jonathan smiled at Nancy's deduction whereas I widened my eyes reluctantly, grabbing some chips from his bag. "I don't know, Nancy... when I told him I liked him --"

The shocked comments overlapped as they came out of each other's mouths. "You did what?" "Shut up!" "Seriously?"

I nodded. "I had no other choice! Apparently Michael is eavesdropping our conversations, Linn."

Angie banged her fist against the table. "That's just great! After this my dad will just have to get me my own line."

I squinted at her. "Whatever - Michael told him he heard us going off about some guy on the phone. And he was so... upset - I didn't like to see him like that so I just kind of... burst out."

"...How?"

"First, I clarified that it was him that I liked."

Jonathan chuckled. "That's not even close to bursting out."

"Well, that's not it. There's more. He started *laughing* ," the three tilted their heads in confusion, "...and pointed out how long we have known each other. He said I didn't even know him, and that made me *so mad* ! I-"

"You what?" The three asked in unison.

“...I went off on him.” I confessed with a wince. “I started talking back at him in this god awful tone, spilling out everything I knew about him, because I just wanted to *prove him wrong* !” I covered my face with embarrassment.

Nancy had her hand and Jonathan’s hand interlaced in front of her face with worry. “...And then?”

“Then? - Then I tried to *leave* , but he was like ‘Is that all?’ But it wasn’t, not even close -- and it felt like it was the right moment to take a wild guess and bring his feelings about me on front but...” I sighed, “...I chickened out.”

I earned a bunch of ‘boo’s and ‘no way’s from my friends. “I just! - I don’t think I’m ready to lose him as a friend. I really wanna see what it could be like.”

“(Y/N)... no offense, but the only thing keeping you guys apart is yourselves.” Jonathan chimed.

“Well, that’s you.” I retrieved the chips from him to grab another handful and I noticed Angie extremely quiet. “What’s up Angie?”

She huffed loudly. “It’s Billy.”

We let out a collective sigh before I answered: “What ever about that exemplaire of Macho Pride?”

She snorted at my reference, but her expression quickly became serious again. “I beat the douchebag in a race today.”

“That’s amazing, Angie! Shouldn’t you be proud of yourself?”

“No, I’m not! Dude is beaten up from his fight with Steve. He shouldn’t even be racing. He’s a purple-eyed pulp.”

“Whoa! When did you become so concerned for Billy’s wellbeing?”

She stabbed the salad on her tray with her fork and stared at Nancy for a few seconds, holding a frown. “No. I mean, I’m not -- he’s a disgusting, privileged, *boy* . I just wanna kick his ass fair and square, that’s all.”

Angie resumed her lunch as we three exchanged reluctant looks.

The bell rang shortly after.

"I decided to take a look at this morning's newspaper." I informed Michael as soon as he set foot through the doorstep.

He hung his backpack on the perch. "So?"

"So - I'm looking for a job, you asshat."

"Oh. Cool."

"...But all of these need experience. I got zero." I threw the paper at him. "This fucking sucks, Mike."

"Alright, don't be down - lemme see." Michael flickered through the Classified section pages. "-- Yeah, there's nothing."

Michael closed the paper and stared at the front page. "*Fuck.*"

"- Wait!"

"What?"

"Steve, you fucking dumbass!"

"WHAT?"

"The soon-to-be-opened Starcourt Mall is looking for employees for its food court's main attraction: the American favorite, Scoops Ahoy Ice Cream Parlor. Preferably young, no experience needed."

"Holy shit, really?" I pulled out the page and ran to dial the number shown on the advertisement.

"Scoops Ahoy Ice Cream Parlor's corporate line. This is your Ahoy employee- no, I can't do this." The feminine voice at the other end of the line laughed out. *"What's up?"*

"Uhm, I wanted to ask about the job offer shown on today's newspaper."

"Yeah, we're looking for young employees. This job is very busy and I just wanna save up for a car."

"Great, I wanna save up for college. When can I start?"

"Uhm- okay. I didn't think you'd really be up for it, a lot of people have refused it at this point. I guess you could drop by tomorrow? I'll show you the ropes, no pressure."

"Cool. Thanks."

"Wait - what's your name?"

"Steve. Steve Harrington."

"Great. I'm Robin."

"Okay, Robin. See you tomorrow!"

"See ya."

I hung up.

"Well? "

I blinked a few times, taking in what just had happened.

"I think I might have a job."

Author's Note:

kudos and comments are all welcome! ♥